

Appln. of: BEATTIE
Serial No.: 10/647,304
Filed: August 26, 2003

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-28 are pending in this application.

Applicant respectfully reaffirms the election of the species of Fig. 2 for prosecution.

Claims 1-11 and 14-26 read on such species

The drawings and specification stand objected to.

Fig. 2 (and corresponding portions of the specification) has been amended to specifically identify the axially facing jam nut engaging portions of the tie rod 16. Such jam nut engaging portions were shown in original Fig. 2 and have merely been identified by reference numeral with the amendment to Fig. 2. Therefore, no new matter has been added by these amendments.

New FIG. 5 has been added (and referenced in an amendment to the specification). It is essentially identical to FIG. 2 except that the tie rod jam nut 40 is shown disengaged from the tie rod 16. More specifically, the tie rod jam nut 40 is shown as having been rotated away from the tie rod 16 so that the face portion 54 is no longer in engagement with the jam nut engaging portion 70 of the tie rod 16. This is the unlocked position. As the specification specifically describes such a position, no new matter is added by the addition of FIG. 5. The locked position is shown in FIG. 2 where the face portion 54 of the tie rod jam nut 40 is shown in engagement with the jam nut engaging portion 70 of tie rod 16.

It is not believed that it is necessary to show the direction of rotation of the jam nut with respect to the other components, as this can change depending on whether a right-hand

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thread or a left hand thread is used. Clearly, the rotation of the jam nut, in either direction, will be about the axis 58.

In view of the above, it is believed that the objections to the drawings and specification have been overcome and it is respectfully requested that such objections be withdrawn.

Claims 1-11 and 14-26 stand rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph.

Claim 1 has been amended to further clarify the limitations "to lock", "to unlock" and "locked and unlocked positions". The use of jam nuts is known, as shown in (and described with respect to) Fig. 1 (Prior Art), and a person of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that rotating a jam nut positioned on a threaded component (such as a tie rod end) into contact with a tie rod threaded onto the threaded component will place opposing forces on the jam nut and tie rod with respect to the threaded component, thereby rotationally locking the jam nut and tie rod on the threaded component (the locked position) until the jam nut is loosened (and unlocked) with respect to the tie rod (the unlocked position). Claim 1 has been amended to clarify this. Claim 14 has been amended similarly.

Claim 14 has been amended to clarify that the tie rod has "a first end and a second end, the first and second ends each having an axially extended threaded bore constructed and arranged to threadingly receive first and second connecting components, respectively". These first and second connecting components are the same first and second connecting components positively recited in claim 15. As shown in the figures, the inboard connecting component 22 is either the first or second connecting component of claim 14 and the outboard connecting component 24 is the other of the first and second connecting component of claim 14.

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In view of the above, it is believed that the rejection under §112 has been overcome and it is respectfully requested that such rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-11 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hermann.

Amended claim 1 requires, inter alia:

a locking portion connected to the tubular body, the locking portion positioned at the first end of the tubular body and having a threaded bore constructed and arranged to threadingly engage an externally threaded portion of a connecting component threadingly engaged with the tie rod, the locking portion having an axially facing face portion constructed and arranged, upon rotation of the locking portion in a first direction about the threaded portion of the connecting component, to engage an opposed axially facing portion of the tie rod in a manner to create opposed axial forces between the locking portion and the tie rod, and in the externally threaded portion of the connecting component, so as to rotationally and axially lock the connecting component with respect to the tie rod and locking portion and, upon rotation of the locking portion in a direction opposite the first direction about the threaded portion of the connecting component, to disengage the same opposed axially facing portion of the tie rod to release the opposed axial forces between the locking portion and the tie rod, and in the externally threaded portion of the connecting component, so as to rotationally and axially unlock the connecting component with respect to the tie rod and locking portion;

These amendments to clarify the structure and operation of the tie rod jam nut of claim 1 have distinguished claim 1 over Hermann.

The Examiner has designated screw shaft 22 of Hermann as the tie rod of claim 1 and a face portion of inner end 10 of the extension 6 as the face portion of the locking portion of claim 1. However, that face portion designated by the Examiner never engages an “opposed axially facing portion of the tie rod in a manner to create opposed axial forces between the locking portion and the tie rod, and in the externally threaded portion of the connecting component, so as to rotationally and axially lock the connecting component with respect to the tie rod and locking portion”, as required by amended claim 1. In fact, Hermann does not

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disclose or suggest 1) any need for rotationally locking the screw 36 with respect to the extension 6, 2) axially locking the screw 36 with respect to either extension 6 or screw shaft 22, nor 3) any mechanisms for doing so.

For these reasons, Hermann does not disclose or suggest claim 1 as amended and it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

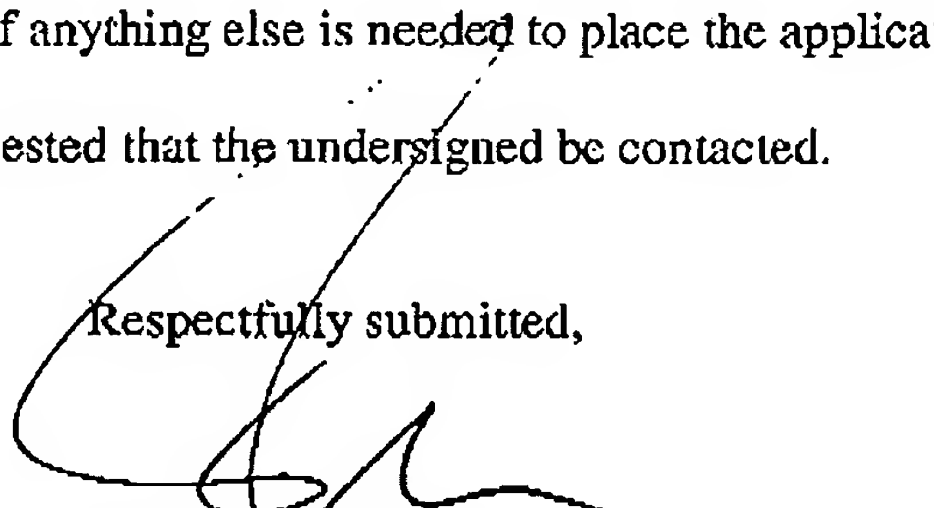
Claims 2-11 depend from claim 1 and are believed allowable for the same reasons as claim 1, as well as for the further limitations contained therein. For this reason, it is respectfully requested that the remaining rejections under Hermann also be withdrawn.

Claims 14-26 have been indicated as being allowable over the prior art. In view of the above amendments to claim 14, claims 14-26 are believed to be in allowable condition.

Claims 12, 13, 27 and 28 depend from generic allowable claims 1 and 14 and are also believed to be in allowable condition.

In view of the above, it is believed that the application is in condition for allowance and such a Notice is respectfully requested. If anything else is needed to place the application in condition for allowance, it is kindly requested that the undersigned be contacted.

Respectfully submitted,



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